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Rep. Kiner in Support of HB 5376
AAC Constables for Fish and Game Protection and the Possession
of Firearms on School Grounds

Public Safety and Security Committee
March 6, 2012

Representative Dargan, Senator Hartley, Senator Guglielmo, Representative Giegler and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. For the record, my name is David Kiner, State Representative for the 59th District in Enfield. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 5376 "AAC Constables for Fish and Game Protection and the Possession of Firearms on School Grounds."

I will be speaking today primarily on sections one and two relating to what I believe only clarifies language in CGS 26-6(a) which will allow for Fish and Game Constables to perform their statutorily prescribed duties after receiving an abbreviated training from a certified training officer at their local police department. Additionally, it would specify that the Fish and Game Constables would have to follow their local Police Department firearm training schedules in order to carry a firearm.

From a plain reading of statute 26-6(a), it seems as though this was the original intent of the statute, however, different interpretations of the statute have emerged over the years, and this bill, which strengthens the explanation, is needed.

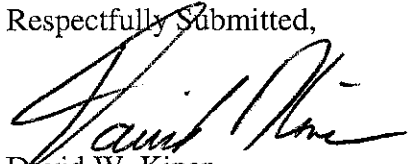
This bill has the strong support of my police chief, Chief Carl Sferrazza for the reason that our fish and game constables are a true asset to the town of Enfield and its police department. These dedicated, talented volunteers will never respond to or be dispatched to a domestic call, a home invasion, a traffic stop, etc. Rather, they are very frequently dispatched and utilized for hunting and fishing violations or wild animal situations. The training specified in this statute is more than sufficient for the duties performed by the fish and game constables.

In addition, the Enfield fish and game constables are much more than a law enforcement unit of the police department. These uniformed men and women assist and educate boaters, hunters, fishermen and homeowners. While at the Enfield boat launch or in their own boat, they make sure boaters have a sufficient number of life preservers. Often, instead of issuing an infraction, they will lend the boaters a life jacket or two. When people are inadvertently violating hunting or fishing laws, these men and women will be happy to hand you the CT hunting and fishing guidelines. And perhaps most importantly to some of you, when you have a raccoon or bat in your house – these trained volunteers will gladly go to your home and safely remove the creature for you.

Lastly, and very briefly, Sec. 3 of the bill would allow for police officers to carry their firearms on school grounds while off duty. It is currently a class D felony for an off duty officer to carry on school grounds. This section of the bill also has strong support of Enfield's police chief.

Thank you all for your consideration, and I look forward to taking your questions and working with you to move this proposal forward.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Kiner", written over a horizontal line.

David W. Kiner

State Representative, 59th District